

Region 3 GPRA Baseline RCRA Corrective Action Facility

Rhodia Inc. (Formerly: Rhone Poulenc)

2300 S. Pennsylvania Ave.
Morrisville, PA 19067
Congressional District 8
EPA ID #: PAD002336410
Last Updated 06/28/2005

Current Progress at the Site

This facility is one of EPA Region III's high priority RCRA corrective action sites. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, in cooperation with Region III, completed a preliminary site evaluation of the Rhodia facility in February 2002.

On September 30, 2004, EPA assessed the environmental investigations information as well as the owner's plan to not use the property or allow any access, and has determined that the site meets EPA's *Current Human Exposure Under Control* Environmental Indicator.

EPA expects that any changes to the current and anticipated idled-state of the property may invalidate the exposure assumptions used to make this decision. At such time, EPA will re-evaluate the *Human Exposures Under Control* Environmental Indicator and assess the potential exposure pathways. Therefore, EPA's determination of whether this site meets EPA's Environmental Indicator may be modified in the future, according to new environmental data presented.

EPA is currently reviewing groundwater data to determine whether the Facility meets the *Migration of Contaminated Groundwater Under Control* environmental indicator.

PADEP has designated the groundwater beneath the Facility as a "non-use" aquifer as defined in the Act 2 regulations. Thus, while the groundwater data review proceeds, EPA is aware that there are no current drinking water exposures.

Background:

The Rhodia facility is located on 87 acres in an area zoned as "Hi-Heavy Industrial." The manufacturing facility sits on 40 acres, and the remaining 47 acres are wooded. The property is bordered on the north by a residential area, to the south by Biles Creek, and vacant property. On the east is the Delaware River, on the west are scrub areas. The entire property is fenced to restrict access.

The facility has had a series of owner/operators, beginning with Victor Chemical in 1948. Stauffer Chemical bought the property in the mid-1960s, and subsequently sold it to Rhône-Poulenc Basic Chemicals (Rhône-Poulenc) in 1987. In 1997, Rhône-Poulenc formed Rhodia, Inc. (Rhodia) as a wholly owned subsidiary, and the facility has operated under Rhodia since early 1998. The facility ceased operations in late 2001.

During its history, a number of chemical products were produced at the facility. The uses of these products covered a wide range, including additives to food, dental paste, Comet commercial cleaner, and oil. Other products were used for water treatment, dyes, flame retardants and desiccants.

Some of the wastes generated by the production lines were treated and disposed of in on-site settling ponds and landfills. There are 10 defined waste disposal areas, primarily in the southern portion of the site. The wastes disposed of in these areas included: weak Monosodium-Disodium Liquor, Arsenic Residue, Stills Burnout Residue, and Arsenic Trisulfide.

Current Environmental Condition

Arsenic is the primary constituent of concern at this facility. The groundwater contains arsenic above the Maximum Concentration Limit (MCL) of 50 ug/l, which is a health-based standard for drinking water. The groundwater flows toward Biles Creek and the Delaware River. At the property boundary near the Delaware River, analysis shows arsenic concentrations up to 537 ug/l. At the boundary near Biles Creek, the arsenic levels are below the MCL.

All of processes have been shut down and the facility has no history of air releases or odor complaints. During its operation, the facility was not a major source of air emissions. There have been no significant releases in the past 20 years nor any failed air inspections.

Contaminated waste material was buried in several on-site landfills from 1948 through the mid-1970s. Although additional surface and subsurface soils sampling must be completed, information collected to date indicates the subsurface soils are contaminated with arsenic. The wastes reportedly placed in these landfills had hazardous levels of arsenic, and the groundwater samples taken directly beneath one of the landfills showed arsenic levels at 12,000 ug/l.

Surface water from the facility enters Biles Creek and eventually discharges to the Delaware River. Sampling in Biles Creek, as well as upgradient and downgradient in the Delaware River, showed no detection of arsenic in the surface water.

Sediment sampling was conducted at the time of the Settling Pond closure. Analysis showed that the sediments are not hazardous.

The facility shut down in all operations in late 2001. The facility is completely fenced in and areas of high contamination, such as the buried waste areas, are enclosed in additional fencing. Furthermore, no construction operations are anticipated. Therefore, there is no expected exposure to workers, construction works, residents, or trespassers from the soils or buried materials at the site.

The surrounding areas downstream of the facility are mostly industrial. The groundwater on-site is not currently used as a drinking water source and all monitoring well-heads are locked. The groundwater is flowing toward the Delaware River and Biles Creek, not toward any residential areas. Accidental contact with the groundwater by residents or anyone on the site is highly unlikely.

Site Responsibility

RCRA Corrective Action activities at this facility are being conducted under the direction of EPA Region 3 with assistance from the State.

Institutional Controls

This area is zoned industrial, therefore no residential activity is permitted on this site. The groundwater under the site will not be used for potable purposes, therefore no drinking water wells are permitted on this property.

Government Contact

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For more information about EPA's corrective action webpage, including Environmental Indicators, please visit our site at: www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/correctiveaction.htm